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THE IDEAL GENTLEMAN AS CONCEIVED BY THE ESSAYISTS
OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

BY

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY
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ENTITLED The Ideal Gentleman as Conceived
by the Essayists of the Early Seventeenth Century
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CHAPTER I.

THE IDEAL GENTLEMAN OF THE RENAISSANCE.

As a background for my study of the ideal gentleman as conceived by the essayists of the seventeenth century, I have considered it profitable to discuss what four representative sixteenth century writers considered excellent in a gentleman.

The old civilization was passing away. The feudal system was rapidly crumbling to decay and slowly and almost imperceptibly strong nations arose out of the feudal ruins. The Renaissance was in the words of Walter Raleigh in his introduction to The Courtier "the heyday of the adventurer, the speculator, the promulgator of new systems, the setter-up of new models." This shifting, restless, adventurous spirit gave "room for a new conception of the state such as was set forth by Sir Thomas More in his Utopia, for a new conception of the position of a ruler such as was set forth by Machiavel in his Prince; for a new conception of the duties and opportunities of the individual in society, such as was set forth by Count Baldassare Castiglione in his Book of the Courtier."¹

The word, "Renaissance," is a portmanteau phrase and no single book can include its many facets but The Courtier is the most representative of the chief moral and social ideas of the age. The dominant note of the Renaissance, the individualism which subordinates everything to the free development of human faculties, is not expressed so completely in any other Renaissance book.

1. Introduction to The Courtier by Walter Raleigh, p. 7-8

After the laxness of the Middle Ages people felt a desire for a definite form of conduct and began to analyze principles of conduct with the purpose of determining the salient qualities which are necessary for a well-rounded individual. The Italians were the first to attain this height of culture which Castiglione idealizes in The Courtier.

The Courtier was translated into English in 1561 by Sir Thomas Hoby but the preoccupation of sixteenth century England with the question of morals caused the writers of this age to draw their inspiration from Plutarch, Seneca and Cicero rather than from Italian sources. The English writers did not seek to embody the complete renaissance ideal in one figure, but treated one or more phases of the ideal. Thomas Elyot¹ states that his purpose in writing The Governor is to trace the moral and political education "of them that hereafter may be deemed worthy to be Governors of the public weal."² Although Roger Ascham³ shows an appreciation

1. Sir Thomas Elyot (1490?-1546) diplomatist and author. Elyot published his Boke named The Governor with a dedication to Henry VIII in 1531. Its great popularity at the Court brought Elyot an appointment as ambassador to Court of Charles V. Elyot was chiefly interested in political philosophy and the theory of education. As a Greek scholar who first translated part of Isocrates into English, he is well remembered. His important works are: 1. Boke named the Governour, 1531, 1534, '37, '46, '57, '65, '80, 2. Castel of Helth 1534, '39, '41, '61, '80, '95. 3. The Dictionary of Syr T. Eliot knyght - 1538, '45.

2. The Proheme to the Governor - p. cxcii

3. Roger Ascham (1515-1568) attended John's College, Cambridge where besides devoting himself to Greek he made himself master of almost all extant Latin literature, paid some attention to mathematics, became an accomplished musician, and acquired singular skill in penmanship. In 1548 he became tutor of Queen Elizabeth whose skill in language he praises profusely in his Schoolmaster. The best known of his books are: 1. Toxophilus, 1545, 2d and 3rd ed. 1571, 4th 1589. 2. The Schoolmaster - 1570, 1571, 1572, 1579, 1583, 1589.

of the courtly graces the title which he gives to his treatise, The Schoolmaster, indicates its highly specialized aim. Lyly's Euphues is not a logical treatment of ~~an~~ unified ideal but reflects all the ideals of his day. If Lyly had combined these ideals, the lover, the courtier, the philosopher, and embodied them in one ideal figure, Euphues would have approximated The Courtier.

To be a gentleman in the early Renaissance a man must be well born as Castiglione in fashioning his perfect Courtier says, "I will have this our Courtier therefore to be a Gentleman born and of a good house. For it is a great deal less dispraise for him that is not born a gentleman to fail in the acts of virtue than for a gentleman. For nobleness of birth is (as it were) a clear lamp that showeth forth and bringeth into light both good and bad and inflameth and provoketh unto virtue as well as with the fear of slander, as also with the hope of praise. --- The noble of birth count it a shame not to arrive at the least at the bounds of their predecessors set forth unto them. Therefore it chanceth always both in arms and in all other virtuous acts that the most famous are gentlemen."¹ Then the true Courtier, who is never indifferent to the impression he makes, realizes the prestige that nobility of birth gives, "For where there are two in a nobleman's house which at the first have given proof of themselves with works good or bad, as soon as it is known that one is a gentleman born and the other not, the unnoble shall be much less esteemed with everyman, than the gentleman, and he must with much travail and long time imprint

1. The Courtier, p. 44

into men's heads a good opinion of himself which the other shall get in a moment, and only for that he is a gentleman; and how weighty these imprintings are every man may easily judge."⁶

Elyot admits that true nobility is constituted in merit but if inherited reputé, titles, land, etc., are added there is then conspicuous distinction. "It would be moreover declared that were virtue joined with great possessions or dignity hath long continued in the blood or house of a gentleman, as it were in inheritance, then nobility is most showed, and these gentlemen most honored; for as much as continuance in all things that is good hath ever preeminence in praise and comparison."¹

Ascham likewise wishes to link virtue with nobility for, "Nobility governed by learning and wisdom is indeed most like a fair ship, having tide and wind at will, under the rule of a skillful master."²

Lyly shifts his position, as in the first part of the Euphues he discredits nobility of birth, as these statements show, "Not gifts of fortune, noble birth, but virtue maketh the poor man rich."³ "It is not the descent of birth but the consent of conditions that maketh the gentleman, neither great manors but good manners that express the true image of dignity."⁴ But in Euphues and his England, Euphues frequents the court and the aristocratic courtly ideal replaces what Croll⁵ designates as the bourgeoisie

1. Elyot, The Governor, Bk I, p. 29

2. Ascham, The Schoolmaster, p. 124

3. Lyly, Euphues, p. 176

4. Ibid, p. 176

5. Euphues, edited by Croll and Clemons, 1916 p. 249

6. The Courtier p. 47.

ideal of the Anatomy of Wit. A study of Lyly's¹ life, his frequent complaints to the Queen for recognition, and his delight in the court, would influence us to regard this so-called democratic tendency in the Anatomy of Wit merely as a literary attitude, not as an expression of Lyly's own opinions.

The Renaissance realized the body's dignity and was not unconscious that a perfect physique, like nobility of birth, gave a man a certain prestige. The ideal Courtier of Castiglione must do everything with a precision and grace that could only be accomplished by a perfectly developed body under perfect control. The principal vocation of the Courtier is still to be arms. Castiglione, every inch a Courtier himself, says, "I judge the principal and true profession of a Courtier ought to be in feats of arms, the which above all I will have him to practice lively, and to be known among others for his hardiness, for his achieving of enterprises, and for his fidelity toward him whom he serveth."² "And herein I think the chief point is to handle well all kind

1. John Lyly (1554?-1606) dramatist and author of Euphues. According to Wood while at Magdalen College, Oxford, Lyly was "always averse to crabbed studies of logic and philosophy. His genial being naturally being to pleasant paths of poetry." Before 1584 Lyly began a series of plays to be performed at the Court by children's acting companies connected with the Chapel Royal and St. Paul's Cathedral. Lyly entered Parliament as member for Hindon in 1589, and was subsequently elected for Aylesbury in 1593, for Appleby in 1597, and again for Aylesbury in 1601. But he was still ambitious for a court office and complained to the Queen for some substantial recognition of her favor. Euphues, his chief work, appeared in two parts, the first, Euphues, The Anatomy of Wit, licensed on 2 Dec. 1578, and was published the next year. Other editions 1581, '85, '97, 1607, 1613, 1617, 1623, '16, '36. The second part, Euphues and his England, was licensed on 24 July 1579 and was issued twice in 1580; other editions in 1586, '97, 1606, '13, '17, '23, '31, '36.

2. The Courtier, p. 48.

of weapon both for footman and horseman, and to know the vantages in it."¹ After skill in arms the next important requirement for a Courtier is to ride a "great horse" and in this as in all other exercises he is to excel others. A mediocre performance is not tolerated in a Courtier. "Let him set all his delight and diligence to wade in everything a little farther than other men, so that he may be known among all men for one that is excellent."² The Courtier must excell in hunting, swimming, leaping, but he must "set aside tumbling, climbing upon a cord, and such other matters that taste somewhat of jugglers' craft, and do little beseem a gentleman."³ He is to do all his feats with a slight, "as though they were rather naturally in him, than learned with study: and use a recklessness to cover art, without minding greatly what he hath in hand to a man's seeming."⁴

Elyot's practical purpose is reflected in his attitude toward physical recreation. Naturally, as one of the duties of the politician or Governor is to defend the state, Elyot regards "shooting with a long bow" as the principal exercise. "This is a feat, whereby Englishmen have been most dreaqed and had in estimation with outward princes as well enemies as allies."⁵ "Among these exercises it shall be convenient to learn to handle sundry weapons, especially the sword and the battle axe, which be for a nobleman most convenient. But the most honorable exercise, in my opinion, and that beseemeth the estate of every noble person, is to ride surely and

1. The Courtier, p. 53

2. Ibid, p. 54

3. Ibid, p. 55

4. Ibid p. 368

6. Elyot, The Governor, Bk I, p. 299

cleanly on a great horse and a rough, which undoubtedly - - - imparteth a majesty and dread to inferior persons beholding him above the common course of other men, daunted a fierce and cruel beast."¹ Elyot, unlike Castiglione, does not praise these physical exercises for the pleasure and joy that can be obtained from excelling others but justified them from the utilitarian point of view; for example, swimming is a necessary art, for it may be the means of preserving life.

Ascham, although a schoolman himself, agrees with Castiglione and joins "learning with comely exercises." The perfect scholar according to Ascham must have "a countenance not weerish and crabbed, but fair and comely; a personage not wretched and deformed, but tall and goodly; for surely, a comely countenance with a goodly stature giveth credit to learning and authority to the person."² Ascham laments that the deformed are so often chosen as the best fitted to become scholars, "For if a father have four sons, three fair and well formed both mind and body, and the fourth wretched, lame and deformed, his choice shall be to put the worst to learning as one good enough to become a scholar."³

Ascham does not want his readers to mistake his attitude toward recreation, so he states his views very clearly, "I do not mean by all this talk that young gentlemen should always be poring on a book, and by using good studies should lose honest pleasure and haunt no good pastime. I mean nothing less. For it is well known that I both like and love, and have always and do yet still use all the exercises and pastimes that be fit for my nature

1. Elyot, The Governor, Bk.I, p. 181-2.

2. Ascham, The Schoolmaster, p. 106-7

3. Ibid.

and ability; and besides natural disposition, in judgment also I was never either stoic in doctrine or anabaptist in religion to mislike a merry, pleasant, and playful nature, if no outrage be committed against law, measure and good order."¹ "Therefore to ride comely, to run fair at the tilt or ring; to play at all weapons, to shoot fair in bow, or surely in gun; to vault lustily, to run, to leap, to wrestle, to swim, to dance comely, to sing and play on instruments cunningly; to hawk, to hunt; to play at tennis and all pastimes generally, which be joined with labor, used in open place, and on the day-light, containing either some fit exercise for war, or some pleasant pastime for peace, be not only comely and decent but also very necessary for a courtly gentleman to use."² Ascham's undoubted love of sport is an interesting trait, as it distinguishes him from the over-indulgent students of the Renaissance with whom he had much in common.

Lyly's attitude toward sports may be summed up in this sentence, "I esteem it as expedient in feats of arms and activity to employ the body as in study to wash the mind; yet so should the one be tempered with the other as it might seem a great shame to be valiant and courtly without learning, as to be studious and bookish without valor."³

The Courtier's education differs from that of the pedantic scholars of the monasteries, as he is always to count "arms his principal profession, and all the other good qualities for an ornament thereof, and principally among soldiers, lest he be like unto

1. Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, p. 138.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 139-140

3. Lyly, *Euphues*, p. 249.

them that in learning will seem men of war and among men of war, learned."¹ Although the courtier's principal profession is arms, he is to have great respect for learning. Castiglione criticizes the attitude which the French take toward learning, "I blame the Frenchmen because they think letters hurt the profession of arms; and I hold the opinion that it is not so necessary for any man to be learned, as it is for a man of war. And these two points linked together and aided the one by the other will I have to be in the Courtier."²

Then Castiglione outlines the extensive and varied educational program which he thinks meet for a courtier. "In letters I will have (him) to be more than indifferently well seen, at the least in those studies which they call Humanity, and to have not only the understanding of the Latin tongue, but also of the Greek, because of the many and sundry things that with great excellency are written in it."³ "What mind is so faint, so bashful and of so base a courage, that in reading the acts and greatness of Caesar, Alexander, Scipio, Hannibal, and so many others is not incensed with a most fervent longing to be like them."⁴ Then he commends the knowledge of sundry other tongues for the courtier, "and especially Spanish and French, because of the intercourse of both the one nation and the other is much haunted in Italy."⁵ "Let him much exercise himself in poets, and no less in orators and historiographers, and also in

1. The Courtier, p. 86

2. Ibid, p. 87

3. Ibid, p. 85

4. Ibid p. 84

5. Ibid. p. 147

writing both rime and prose, and especially in this our vulgar tongue." The writing of poetry is encouraged for "he shall by this means never want pleasant entertainment with women who ordinarily love such matters." The Courtier's education is also to train his powers of appreciation and the writing of poetry helps him to "know perfectly the labor and toil of writers," and to "taste of the sweetness and excellency of styles."¹ "Our courtier ought in no wise leave out painting and carving for besides their profit in war they are a great delight and maketh him also understand the beauty of lively bodies, and not only in the sweetness of fisnamy, but in the proportion of all the rest, as well in men as other living creatures."² A lover especially should have the "feat of painting" so as to appreciate woman's beauty.

The Courtier's conversation must be gracious and tactful, "and knowing the difference of one man and another every day alter fashion and manner according to the disposition of them he is conversant withall."³ This polished gentleman is to modulate his voice so that it will not be "too subtle or soft, as in a woman; nor yet so boisterous and rough as in one of the country, but shrill clear and well framed with a prompt pronunciation and with fit manners and gestures, which consist in certain motions of all the body, not affected nor forced, but tempered with a mannerly countenance and with a moving of the eyes that may give a grace and accord with the words and (as much as he can) signify also with gestures the intent and affection of the speaker."⁴

For fear the Courtier will be lacking in the charms which

1. The Courtier, p. 85

2. Ibid, p. 96

3. The Courtier, p. 122

4. Ibid, p. 69

make him esteemed in company, Castiglione adds, "I am not pleased with the Courtier if he be not also a musician, and besides his understanding and conning upon the book, have skill in like manner on sundry instruments. For if we weigh it well, there is no ease of the labors and medicine of feeble minds to be found more honest and more praiseworthy in time of leisure than it. And principally in courts; where (besides the refreshing of vexations that music bringeth unto each man) many things are taken in hand to please women withall, whose tender and soft breasts are soon pierced with melody and filled with sweetness."¹

Elyot's course of study for the youth is, like the one proposed by Castiglione, very comprehensive. It includes Greek and Latin, history, cosmography, geometry, astronomy, oratory, rhetoric, drawing, painting and music. But The Governor differs from The Courtier in that Elyot emphasizes the practical rather than the polished phase of education. Elyot does not praise Homer for his beauty of style or imagery but gives a practical appreciation of him because his books contain "most perfectly expressed, not only the documents martial and discipline of arms, but also incomparable wisdoms and instructions for politic governance of people; with the worthy commendation and laud of noble princes; where with the readers shall be so all enflamed that they most fervently shall desire and covet by the imitation of their virtues, to acquire semblable glory."²

1. The Courtier, p. 89

2. Elyot, The Governor, p. 58-59.

Although Elyot's aim is narrower than that of The Courtier, yet he realizes that a general education is necessary as a background for later specialization. Elyot says that if children were "retained in the right study of very philosophy until they passed the age of twenty-one years, and then set to the laws of this realm (being one brought to a more certain compendous study, and either in English, Latin or good French written in a more clean and elegant style) undoubtedly they should become men of so excellent wisdom that throughout all the world should be found in no common weal more noble counsellors, our laws not only comprehending most excellent reasons, but also being gathered and compact of the pure meal or flour sifted out of the best laws of all other countries."¹

Ascham's educational theory, which he states in the second book of The Schoolmaster, although very interesting in itself, does not come within the scope of this study as he is writing with his eyes on the scholar rather than with reference to the gentleman.

Lyly states his theory of education in Euphues' letter to Ephebus. Lyly's inspiration comes directly from Plutarch and he sketches the training of the youth from infancy in a true Plutarchian manner. In his discussion of whether education is to prepare for an active or a contemplative life Lyly paraphrases from Plutarch, "There is amongst men a trifold kind of life; active, which is about civil function and administration of the commonweal; speculative, which is in continual study; the third, a life led most

1. Elyot, The Governor, p. 141.

commonly a lewd life, an idle and vain life, the life that the Epicures account their whole felicity, a voluptuous life replenished with all kind of vanity. If this active life be without philosophy it is an idle life, or at least a life evil employed, which is worse; if the contemplative life be separated from the active, it is most unprofitable. I would, therefore, have my youth to so bestow his study as he may both be exercised in the commonweal to common profit and well employed privately for his own perfection so as by his study the rule he shall bear may be directed, and by his government his study may be increased."¹

Lyly, like the other Renaissance writers, advocates a broad general education. "It behooveth the youth with all industry to search not only the hard questions of the philosophers but also the fine cases of the lawyers, not only the quirks and qualities of the logicians but also to have a sight in the numbers of the arithmeticians, the triangles, and circles of the geometricians, the spheres and globe of the astrologians, the notes and crotchets of the musicians, the odd conceits of the poets, the simples of the physicians, and in all things to the end that when they shall be willed to talk of any of them they may be ignorant in nothing. - - - Even so whosoever that hath a sharp and capable wit, let him as well give his mind to sacred knowledge of divinity as to the profound study of philosophy, that by his wit he may not only reap pleasure but profit, not only contentation in mind

¹ Lyly, *Euphues*, p. 126.

but quietness in conscience."¹

Although these Renaissance writers advocate a broad, cultural development yet they never forget that the gentleman's chief duty is to the state. They are training a man who may later be, as Elyot puts it, "a Governor." The Governor must necessarily feel an added weight of moral responsibility as his subjects will regard him as their exemplar. Hence the study of moral philosophy is indispensable to one who is later to become one of the counselors of the realm. "By moral Philosophy," says Hallam, "we are to understand not only systems of ethics and exhortations to virtue, but that survey of the nature or customs of mankind which men of reflective minds are apt to take and by which they become qualified to guide and advise their followers."²

Castiglione in The Courtier illustrates this close union between moral and political questions. The Courtier's chief aim is to serve and advise his Prince so his moral training consists largely in developing and strengthening his loyalty to his country and his Prince. Castiglione says that "the manner and way to rule and to reign in the right kind" is the "virtue, which perhaps among all the matters that belong unto man, is the chiefest and rarest."³

Elyot likewise in his definition of Moral Philosophy discusses the question of morals in their political rather than in their religious significance. "The most noble study of Moral Philosophy which teacheth both virtue, manners and chief policy,

1. Lyly, *Euphues*, p. 126

2. Hallam, *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, v. I, p. 388

3. *The Courtier*, p. 310

whereby at the last we should have in this realm sufficiency of worshipful lawyers, and also a public weal equivalent to the Greeks or Romans."¹

With some reluctance one turns from this conception of an ideal gentleman in which all physical, mental, and moral faculties were so highly developed, in which theory and practice were so perfectly and harmoniously blended, for the seventeenth century has no ideal as complete or as attractive as this, the Renaissance ideal.

1. Elyot, The Governor, p. 162.

CHAPTER II.

The Ideal Gentleman as Conceived by the Essayists of the First Half of the Seventeenth Century.

Bacon is the only essayist in the first half of the seventeenth century whose essays have won any high degree of recognition for their author. But there was a group of essayists between Bacon and Cowley who enjoyed considerable vogue during the seventeenth century. They have been much neglected but an interest has been recently revived in them in tracing the development of the essay. But more especially are they important because of the light which they throw on the ideals of the age.

The early seventeenth century essayists did not regard the essay as a delightful piece of literature which might be read solely for entertainment, but it appealed to them rather as a form which was suitable for moral instruction because of its compactness and conciseness. When the Italians with their love of grace and polish had wished to express their ideal, they had used the dialogue because of its exterior charm. Its perfect finish accorded well with their courtly ideal. But the early seventeenth century writers had a more direct purpose. Their principal aim was to formulate a code of behavior which would be a guide not only for their own conduct but for their readers. The dialogue would have been too circuitous a method of expression for such a didactic purpose, but the essay as they conceived it was peculiarly fitted for this moralistic vein. The Courtier seems to have had very little influence on these essayists as I did not

find a single allusion to it. They drew most of their inspiration from the early moralists, especially Plutarch, Seneca, and Cicero. An age which was as interested in morals as the seventeenth century would naturally find Plutarch a veritable mine from which they might draw for illustrations.

The followers of Bacon were more influential in the early part of this century than the imitators of Montaigne. These early writers did not grasp the significance of Montaigne's method or style. Although they lacked Bacon's great practical sagacity, yet they found his style easier to imitate. Then the short, pointed, aphoristic manner of Bacon suited their purpose better than the rambling style of Montaigne. The character and the essay were closely associated in this century, and the form of the Baconian essay and the character were regarded ~~regarded~~ by many as analogous forms. Some writers did not make any definite distinction between the two types and used the terms interchangeably. The following titles will be sufficient to indicate this: John Stephens, Essays and Characters, Ironical and Instructive; Nicholas Breton, Characters Upon Essays, Moral and Divine; John Earle, Microcosmography, or a Piece of the World Discovered, in Essays and Characters. For my purpose it will not be necessary to make any distinction between character writings and essays as I shall draw from both indiscriminately.

The rank and social position which these essayists held determined to a great extent the ideal which they advocated. These essayists belonged to rather prominent families who had long taken an active part in English affairs. This accounts for the strong

royalist sympathies which they express in their essays. These essayists can be divided into men of two professions: churchmen and men engaged in the affairs of the state. In the ranks of the churchmen were Bishop Hall,¹ John Earle,² Owen Felltham,³ and Thomas Fuller⁴. The men of affairs included besides Bacon, Rich-

1. Joseph Hall (1574-1656) came of a devout Puritan family and from his infancy was intended for the ministry. His religious Meditations gained a great reputation for him as a Divine. He became Bishop of Exeter and took a conspicuous part in the bishop's controversy in 1641. In 1608 a translation of Hall's Latin Satire printed twice abroad, was published in London as "The Discovery of a New World." He also published two volumes of Epistles and his book of "Characters of Vices and Virtues."

2. John Earle (1601-1665) attended Oxford and while there wrote his first poem which was a lament on the death of Francis Beaumont, the dramatist, in 1616. Earle was always intimate with Charles the Second. On 25 March, 1661, he was nominated a commissioner to review the prayer book, 28 March preached at the court, and 23 April assisted at the coronation. Earle published his Microcosmography, or a Piece of the World Discovered, in Essays and Characters" in 1628.

3. Owen Felltham (1602-1668) was secretary or chaplain with the family of the Earle of Thomond. His poems exhibit strong royalist sympathies. In the last line of his "Epitath to the Eternal Memory of Charles the First", he refers to the dead King, as "Christ the Second." Felltham was faithful to the Church of England but moderate, not fanatical. Felltham was well known to the literary men of his day. His "Resolves" were very popular and went through six editions between 1620 and 1647.

4. Thomas Fuller (1608-1661) was son of the rector of Aldwinckle St. Peters, Northamptonshire. In 1639 Fuller published the first of his historical writings, "The History of the Holy Warre." It shows great wit and reading and was very popular under the Restoration. He was elected proctor for the diocese of Bristol in 1640. Fuller was exceedingly popular as a preacher and usually had two congregations, one in the church and the other looking through the window. Though he was opposed to the Puritans, he was regarded as luke-warm by the passionate loyalists of Oxford. The Holy and Profane State, the most popular and characteristic of all his books, appeared in 1642. Other editions of it appeared in 1648, 1652, 1663.

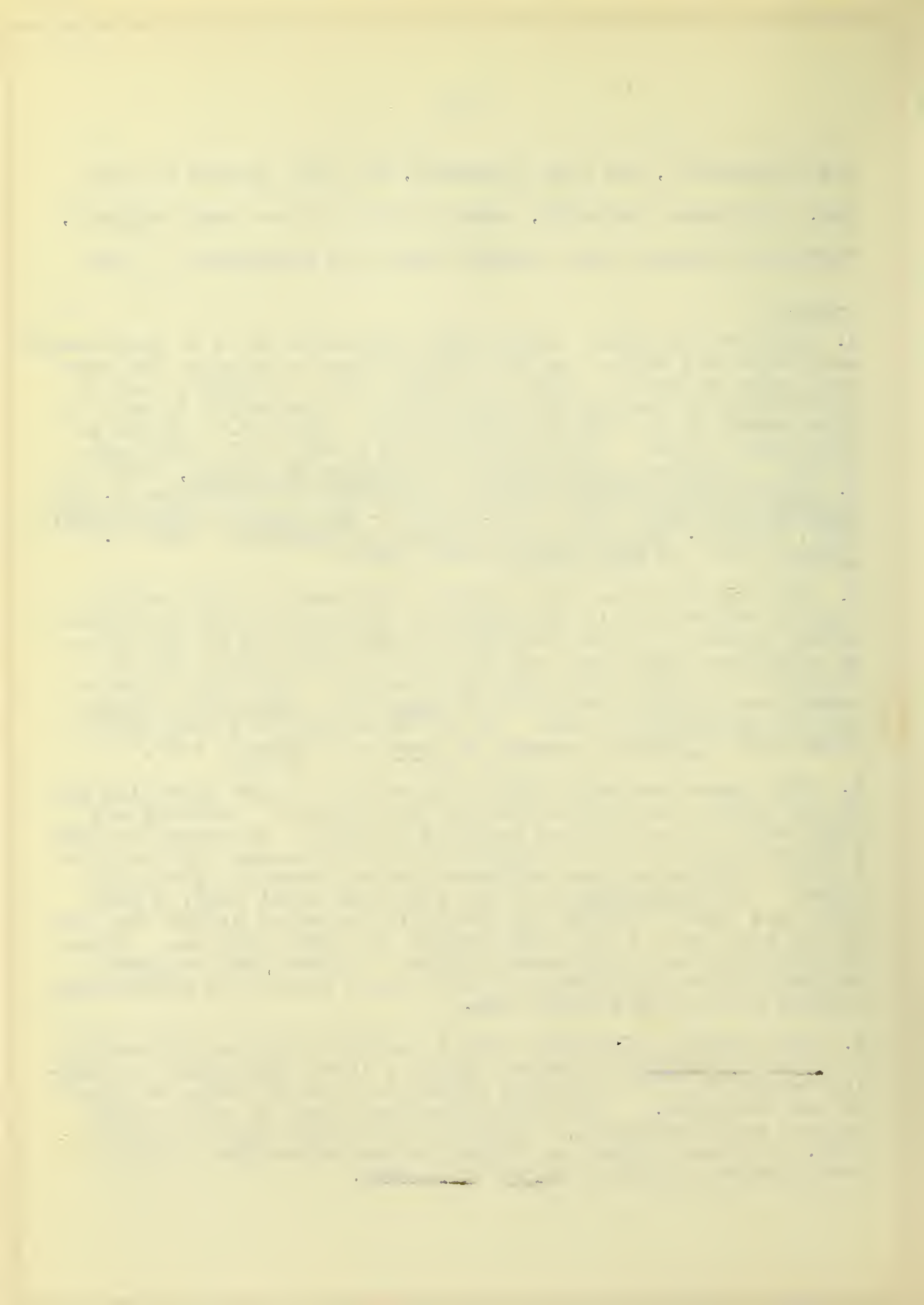
ard Brathwaite¹, and John Stephens², who both studied for the law, Sir Thomas Overbury³, sewer to the King and Grey Brydges⁴, fifth Lord Chandos, who attended James I's Parliament. Sir

1. Richard Brathwaite (1558?-1673) matriculated as a "gentleman's son" at Oxford at the age of sixteen where he remained for several years enjoying a scholarly life, until his father desired him to take up the law as a profession. Brathwaite is said to have served on the royalist side in the civil war. He was a voluminous writer. The following are a few of his best known works: 1. Barnabae Itinerarium or Barnabae's Journal, 1638; 2. The Shepherd's Tales, 1621; a collection of pastorals; 3. The English Gentleman, 1630, 1641, 1652; 4. The English Gentlewoman, 1631, 1641; 4. Whimzies or a New Cast of Character, 1631; 5. Essaies upon the Five Senses, 1620, 1635.

2. John Stephens came of a numerous Gloucester family which took an active part in the municipal politics during the seventeenth century. He was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1611 where he practiced common law, but he held no office there and attained to no prominence in his profession. His sole claim to remembrance is his authorship of Essays and Characters, Ironical and Instructive, 1615. He is the author of a long and tedious play, Cynthia's Revenge or Menander's Extasy, 1613.

3. Sir Thomas Overbury (1581-1613) was the eldest surviving son of Sir Thomas Nicholas Overbury of Gloucester. Overbury was made sewer to the King and knighted in 1607. He seemed to have a bright political future before him but he became the victim of a court intrigue and was sentenced to the tower and later poisoned. His Characters were not published until 1614, a year after his death. Their popularity is indicated by the fact that in the next year, 1615, they reached the sixth edition. Three more editions were published in 1616. By 1638 they had gone through sixteen editions, then there was a pause; the seventeenth edition was not made until 1664.

4. Grey Brydges (1579-1621) who is credited with the authorship of Horae Subsecivae by Horace Walpole, lived sumptuously at Sudeley Castle and his liberality gained for him the title of "King of the Cotswolds." He took an important part in all courtly masques and tournaments. Brydges was created Duke of York in 1604. Anthony a Wood and Bishop Kennett state that Gilbert Cavendish was author of Horae Subsecivae.

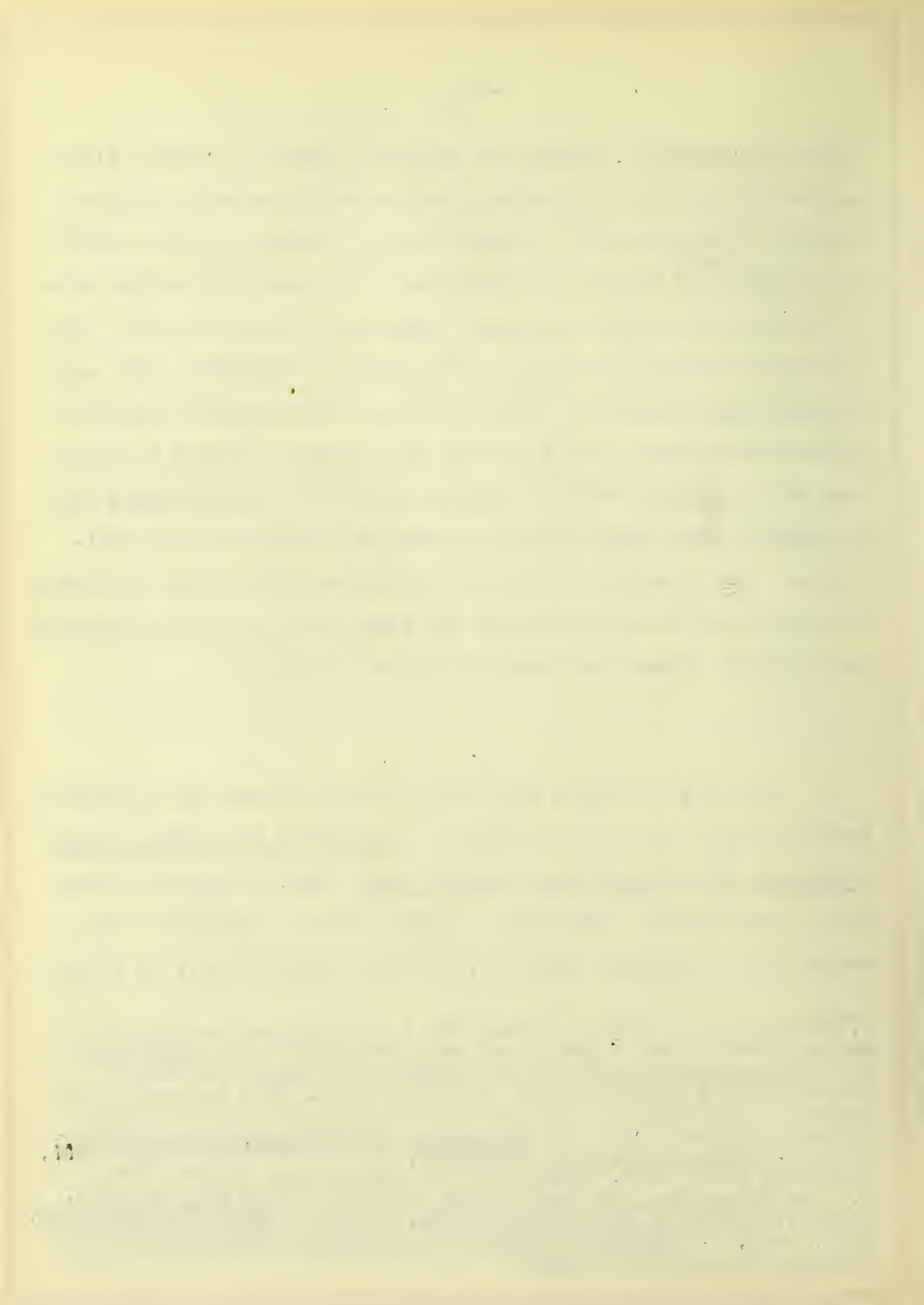


William Cornwallis¹, though not actively engaged in public life, may be included in this second class as he indicates in his essays his preferences for a public life. Although I have divided the essay^{ists} into these two professions, yet these professions were not as distinct as this division indicates, for in the first half of the seventeenth century the interests of church and state were closely linked together. In an age when religious and political controversies were never far below the surface the king felt the need of the support of the churchmen and often the churchmen was as closely associated with the fortune of the king as the politician. As a result of this the ideal advocated by the churchmen does not differ materially from the ideal which the men of affairs held as both stress the practical aim of education.

I.

The term gentleman had a more limited content in the seventeenth century than it has to-day. The Ladies Dictionary, Being a General Entertainment for the Fair Sex, 1694, defines a gentleman in this manner: "Gentleman - seems to be a compound of two words, the one French (gentile), the other Saxon (mon), as if you

1. Sir William Cornwallis (died 1631) was knighted in 1602. He was a friend of Ben Johnson and employed him to write Penates, or a Private Entertainment for the King and Queen, on their visit to his house at Highgate on Mayday 1604. His essays are in imitation of Montaigne but lack the sprightliness of the French author. His works are: 1. Discourses upon Seneca, the Tragedian, 1601; 2. Essayes by Sir W. Cornwalys, 1st part 1600, 2d part 1601, reprinted 1616, 1617, 1632, with the essays upon Seneca, 1631; 3. The Miraculous and Happy Union between England and Scotland, 1604; 4. Essays on Certain Paradoxes, 1617; 5. Essays on Encomiums, 1616, 1626; 6. Verses in Sylvester's Lacrymae, Lacrymarum on the death of the Prince of Wales.



would say, a man well-born. The Italian follows the very word calling those gentil-homini whom we call Gentlemen." The first two definitions of a gentleman in the Webster's dictionary show that the word gentleman has gradually become less restricted in meaning. The first definition which is marked obsolete, defines a gentleman as "a man well-born, one of good family though not noble, one entitled to bear a coat of arms; sometimes any one above the social condition of a yeoman." The second definition gives our modern conception of a gentleman, "one of gentle or refined manners; a well-bred man of fine feelings, especially one of good character, raised above the vulgar by education, habit and social esteem."

When these seventeenth century essayists use the word, "gentleman," they use it in its narrower sense. Fuller clearly has the first definition of a gentleman in mind in his Character of the Good Yeoman. He does not include the yeoman in his conception of a gentleman but admits the possibility of the yeoman bridging the gap between the station of a yeoman and the more exalted position of a gentleman. "The good yeoman is a gentleman in ore whom the next generation may see refined, and is the wax capable of a gentle impression when the Prince shall stamp it." In his Character of the True Gentleman, Fuller states that the true gentleman "is extracted from an ancient and worshipful parentage, if not his valor makes him a son to Caesar."

John Selden¹ in his Table Talk exalts the gentleman above the common people. "Gentleman have ever been more temperate in their religion than the Common People, as having more reason, the others running in a hurry. In the beginning of Christianity the Fathers writ, Contra gentes and Contra gentiles, they were all one; but after all were Christians, the better sort of people still retained the name of gentiles, throughout the four Provinces of the Roman Empire, as Gentil-homme in French, Gentil-homo in Italian, Gentil huombre in Spanish and Gentil-man in English."

John Stephens gives nobility of birth more prominence than the other essayists do. In his essay Of High Birth he says, "High blood likewise be the fittest receptacles for high activities, but if a sack-cloth be embroidered the adjunct may deserve honor, though the ground work be plebian, and men of upstart parentage may in respect of brain take place before Nobility though their persons be odious." He continues in a strain which reminds one of Castiglione when he emphasizes the distinction and prestige that will unquestionably be bestowed upon the noble of birth. "And it may also seem a positive truth that noble and heroical spirits are at first sight trusted with men's

1. John Selden (1584-1654) jurist, entered Clifford Inn and in 1604 was admitted to the bar. From an early period he acted as steward to Henry Grey, 9th earl of Kent, with whom his relations were always close, but study was his main occupation. These two sentences are characteristic of Selden's habitual thought: "All is as the state pleases." "Every law is a contract between the King and the people and therefore to be kept." Not until 1689 when the revolution had given freedom to the press was Table Talk published.

best opinions. It is needful therefore that the merits of a noble birth should be rewarded sooner (though they be less worthy) than of a new proficient, because greatness claims duty to their persons as well as to their merit."

II.

With this conception that a gentleman must be noble or gentle by birth, we would naturally expect that a gentleman would devote his life to one of the so-called honorable professions, arms, the church or the law. As the gentleman is above the common people in rank his education must train him to take up the reins of governance. Since these essayists have a very similar purpose to that of Elyot in The Governor, namely, to direct the youth in his preparation for public life, they will not pay as much attention to the exterior man as the Renaissance writers had. The courtier also had a practical aim, namely to advise and counsel the Prince, yet as his time was to be spent in the pleasant company of the Court these exterior graces were an essential part of his make-up. But the new ideal held up by the essayists is not so much a courtier as a politician, a man of affairs.

The Renaissance had delighted in the body's dignity and grace and the education of the body had received almost equal stress with the education of the mind. Whatever the courtier did was to be performed with a certain grace and easy carelessness such as Fuller describes in his character of The Prince. "He is

careful in choosing his recreation refusing such which in their very posture and situation are too low for a Prince. In all his exercises he affects comeliness, or rather a carelessness in show, to make his activities seem the more natural and avoids a trying and laborious industry, especially seeing each drop of a Prince's sweat is a pearl, and not to be thrown away for no cause. And Princes are not to reach but to trample on recreations, making them their foot stools to heighten their souls for seriousness, taking them in passages thereunto." Owen Felltham likewise praises this careless easiness when he describes how a gentleman should dance. "To dance too exquisitely is so laborious a vanity, that a man would be ashamed to let anybody see, by his dexterity in it, that he hath spent so much time in learning such a trifle. And to be totally ignorant of it, and of the garb and comportment that by learning it, is learn'd; shows a man either stoical or but meanly bred, and not inur'd to conversation. The best is a kind of careless easiness, as if 'twere rather a natural motion than curious and artificial practicing."¹

But with the passing of the courtier as the ideal type of gentleman, physical training is emphasized not because of the grace and freedom it imparts to the body, but for more practical reasons. Johnson recommends hunting as one of the important factors in a powerful commonwealth. "To recommend hunting, I need not, only I will say, that it maketh men laborious, labor begetteth good customs.

1. Felltham. Resolves, 70.

good customs are the roots of good laws, laws founded upon such grounds the producers of military prowess; that when these three concur in any degree of excellcie, they cannot but make a strong and puissant commonweal."¹ Fuller admits that great pleasure may be derived from running, leaping, dancing and walking, yet he says, "Those are the best recreations, which besides refreshing, enable, at least dispose, men to some other good ends. Bowling teaches men's hands and eyes mathematics, and the rules of proportion; swimming hath saved many a man's life. - - - Manly sports are the grammar of military performances. But above all shooting is a noble recreation and half liberal art."² In Horae Subsecivae all field delights such as hunting, riding and hawking are commended when used in moderation. But pleasure must not be the chief end of life for, "as the world is more beholding to men of business, than to men of pleasure; so the men of pleasure must be content to be govern'd by those of employment"³

The attitude which these essayists take toward physical recreation indicates that a life governed by their rules will not be spent in a round of joyous ease and pleasure but will be a life of practical usefulness.

III.

These essayists advocate a rather general education, an education which is deep enough not to be superficial, yet not too specialized to be pedantic. Cornwallis says, "A gentleman should talk like a gentleman, which is, like a wise man; his knowledge ought to

1. Johnson, Robert, Essay 4.

2. Fuller, Bk. III, Chap. 13.

3. Felltham, Resolves 67, p. 329.

be general, it becomes him not to talk of one thing too much, or to be weighed down with any particular profession - -. One knowledge is but one part of the house, a bay-window, or a gable end; who builds his house so maimed? Much less himself; no - be complete."¹ Yet his completeness does not mean an exhaustive treatment of the subject. "Less astronomy than will make a calendar will serve my turn, only so much is sufficient in a gentleman, as seeing the revolutions of the heavens, he may see them without dismayedness and use his knowledge to the comfort of his ignorant charges."²

Fuller likewise commends a general knowledge. "I know the general cavil against general learning is this, that '*aliquis in omnibus est nullus in singulis.*' He that sips of many arts, drinks of none. However we must know that all learning which is but one good science, hath so homogeneal a body, that the parts thereof do with a mutual service relate to and communicate strength and luster to each other."³ Fuller calls language the key of learning and advises the student first to gain skill in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, then to sally into the Oriental languages. The value of Logic, Ethics, and Physics is recognized but he feels it necessary to warn the reader against advancing too far into metaphysics. Felltham, much in the same manner expresses his distrust of logic. "Nothing hath spoiled truth more than the invention of logic. It hath found out so many distinctions, that it enwraps reason in a mist of doubts."⁴

1. Cornwallis, Essay 11.

2. Cornwallis, Essay 45.

3. Fuller, The Holy State, Bk. II, Chap. 7.

4. Felltham, Resolves, 55, p. 97.

The superficially polished gentleman is open to ridicule yet the pedant is held in equally low esteem. Overbury characterizes a pedant in this manner: "He treads in a rule and one hand scans verses, and the other holds his sceptre. He dares not think a thought that the nominative case governs not the verb; and he never had meaning in his life, for he traveled only for words. - - He values phrases, and elects them by the sound, and the eight parts of speech are his servants."¹

A man to be complete in the seventeenth century must not devote himself entirely to his books. Bacon emphasizes this in his essay Of Studies. "Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. . . . To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make judgments totally by their rule is the humor of the scholar." The word, "scholar" is not held in good repute in the seventeenth century but is used synonymous with pedant. Owen Felltham uses the word, "scholar," with this meaning. "You shall scarce find a more fool, than sometimes a mere scholar. - - - He that continually quotes others, argues a barrenness in himself, which forces him to be ever a-borrowing."² Overbury likewise speaks slightly of the scholar. "A mere scholar is an intelligible ass, or a silly fellow in black that speaks sentences more familiarly than sense.

The antiquity of his University is his creed, and the excellency of his college (though but for a match at football) an article of his faith. He speaks Latin better than his mother-tongue, and is

1. Overbury, Characters, A Pedant.

2. Felltham, Resolves 44, p. 80.

a stranger in no part of the world but his own country. - - - It is a wrong to his reputation to be ignorant of anything; and yet he knows not that he knows nothing."¹

Earle, with his "sweet reasonableness," not only portrays the defects of the pedant, but also points out wherein the scholar excels the mere courtier. The down-right scholar is "good metal in the inside, though rough and unscoured without and therefore hated of the courtier, that is quite the contrary- - -. He has not put on the quaint garb of age, which is now man's (imprimis and all the item.) He has not humbled his meditations to the industry of compliment, nor afflicted his brain in an elaborate leg. His body is not set upon nice pins, to be turning and flexible for every motion, but his scrape is homely and his nod worse. He can not kiss his hand and cry, madam, nor talk idle enough to bear her company- - -. He names this word, college, too often, and his discourse beats too much on the University. - - - His fingers are not long and drawn out to handle a fiddle, but his fist clunched with the habit of disputing. - - - He has been used to a dark room, and dark clothes, and his eyes dazzle at a satin suit. - - - But practice him a little in men, and brush him over with good company, and he shall outbalance those glisterers, as far as a solid substance does a feather, or gold, goldlace."²

But it is at this point that the seventeenth century essayist quarrels with the scholar, for the scholar often fails to become practised in men and affairs. Because of this lack of experience

1. Overbury, A Down-right Scholar

2. Earle, A Down-right Scholar.

and narrowness which they attribute to the scholar, the statesman is always exalted over the mere scholar. Cornwallis explains where in lies the statesman's superiority, "That statesmen become more exact in mind than other men, is because they rule men: scholars that are in the next rank, be inferior, because their knowledges are limited, for none confess themselves so thoroughly in their books as in their lives."¹

Experience then is one of the principal parts of this practical education. Johnson says that the most absolute scholar can not attain to any degree of perfection in civil affairs without experience. Since he proposes to mould an ideal gentleman of affairs he outlines how this experience may be acquired. "The rules to perfect experience, are, to frequent the Courts of Justice, as free schools of civil learning, to endeavor to understand all occurrences, to confer concerning the news of the world, with men expert, real, of a deep insight, such as are not carried away with appearances but can spy daylight at a little hole and make judgment out of matters themselves, and discern between Truth and Truth - likeness, and know when covert designs are the foils of more eminent intentions."²

In Horae Subsecivae experience is given precedence over reading. "Though reading do furnish and divert a man's judgment, yet it doth not wholly govern it. Therefore the necessity of knowing the present time, and men, wherein we live, is so great that it is the principal guide of our actions and reading but a supplement."

1. Cornwallis, Essay 52.

2. Johnson, Essay 6.

The experience that can be gained at the court is especially praised. "It must then follow, that a mere country life, if men look as well to the enriching of their minds, as fortune, is not the way to purchase ability, and judgment; for it both secludes us from the knowledge of the Court and government there and also eclipseth from our acquaintance, the great men, and Guiders of the State, which any man who desires to store his understanding, will find to be as necessary to be looked upon, and turned over often, as the most useful books."¹

An age which puts such a high value upon experience will not find the contemplative life attractive. Owen Felltham thinks that it is selfish to withdraw from the world. "A man may upon retiredness make good use of his leisure; yet, surely, those that being abroad, communicate a general good, do purchase to themselves a nobler Palm, than can grow up out of private recess. - - - He robs his Friends, and Country, that, being of use to both, doth steal himself out of the World, and if he be bad, will hardly mend by being alone."²

The early seventeenth century was an age of intense patriotism. Every man felt his obligation to his country so keenly that he had little choice between the active and the contemplative life. Cornwallis expresses his patriotic fervor thus: "Our Country is not indebted to us, rather we are obliged to our Country."³ This same thought is found in Horae Subsecivae, "No man is, or ought to be,

1. Horae Subsecivae, Essay 10.

2. Felltham, Resolves 49, p. 282-3.

3. Cornwallis, Essay 46.

Master of himself, as to take the liberty of electing that course of life, which only his own will, and inclination, governs and desires; but to follow and direct himself in that way which his own abilities, and Country's service make, and think him fit to be disposed unto; it being one principal end of a man's being in this world, to be serviceable in one kind or other, to that kingdom, or Commonwealth where he lives."¹

In Satyrae Seriae² action and contemplation are described as supplementing each other, "A nigh conjunction of action and meditation hath ever been esteemed as a thing fraught with virtue; for as action would cease if it received not nourishment, by meditation; so meditation, if not put in practice, would lose its virtue toward man."³

Although Cornwallis in his essays records the struggle which he had in deciding between the active and the contemplative life, yet such statements as these indicate that the active life held more charms for him. "I am set above many others in the Herald Books, not to sit highest at a table, not to be worshipped with caps and knees, but to have a care for my country."⁴ In old age it is time "to give that life leave to think only of death and to prepare for the last journey. - - - But a life in the strength of mind and body, commits sacrilege to sequester itself from the world."⁵

1. Horae Subsecivae, Essay 10.

2. Satyrae Seriae: or The Secrets of Things; written in Morall and Politicke Observations - Anonymous.

3. Satyrae Seriae, Essay 8.

4. Cornwallis, Essay 19.

5. Ibid, Essay 42.

This preference for the active life is clearly marked in the subject matter which these essayists deemed suitable for study. Just as physical recreation was regarded as very unimportant, so likewise was there little time devoted to mental recreation and subjects which give pleasure to the imagination and the senses. The Courtier's education had been softened and refined by the study of the fine arts, but the early seventeenth century was a cold, intellectual age and most of the essayists agreed with Cornwallis that the book of art which "meddles with a doctrine remote from the use of life, is a busy idleness, and a cover of an unprofitable mind, like fiddlers undertaking the use of an instrument to keep them from a more laborious trade."¹

History would naturally make a strong appeal because it is not "remote from the use of life," and perfects experience. Johnson defines history as "the director of our affairs, by which valor is quickened, judgment ripened, and resolution entertained. - - - It teaches more than twenty men living successively can learn by practice." Yet he qualifies this statement by saying that History with all these remarkable attributes is not a substitute for experience for a man can not "be absolute by reading other men's exploits."²

History is praised in Horae Subsecivae because "by an exquisite expression it doth show unto us the acts and councils of precedent times."³ But this civil instruction is not the only aim of history as the following statements show. "The aim of history.

1. Cornwallis, Essay 45.

2. Johnson, Essay 7.

3. Horae Subsecivae, Essay 12.

is to make a perfect man, namely of an understanding well informed of what is true, and of a good will and constantly disposed to that which is good."¹ "Who writes a history, his principal aim should be truth, and to relate especially the extraordinaries both of good and ill. Of good, that men, taken with the honor they find done them in story, they may be encouraged to perform the like. Of ill, that when men see the infamy that they are branded with, they may leap from all that should make them so stigmatical."²

History which deals with particular men's lives could best accomplish this moral aim. Cornwallis realizes the moral value of history and its usefulness in formulating a code for self-government, when he designates the kind of history which he thinks is most profitable. "History is best which presents particular men's lives. Questionless from the lives of men there are great matters to be fetched. It is a living book by which the Princes and great men may with least difficulty gather instruction for the managing of their lives."³ As a guide for self government in Horae Subsecivae, history is exalted over Moral Philosophy: "Though Moral Philosophy have the same scope and aim, and hath been anciently learned, for the prudent, and virtuous government of a man's life and actions; yet at this day the books of it afford matter rather to dispute of wisdom and virtue, and to define and distinguish of their natures, and sorts, than to make a man either wise or virtuous. - - - Whereas he that by reading of history desires to learn the art how to govern

1. Horae Subsecivae, Essay 12.

2. Felltham, Resolves 38, p. 260.

3. Cornwallis, Essay 45.

himself in the passage of this life, shall find no occasion to dispute but either imitate or eschew."¹

Cornwallis indicates the preferences of his day in his discussion of the historians whom he considers to be the best. "Plutarch and Diogenes Laertius, which two being diligently used can not but recompense the reader's pains, for the temperance of these philosophers mingled with the valor of Plutarch's Captains cannot chose but make an exact man. Comines is a good historiographer. He knew much of the practical part of state-learning, but I hold Guicciardini a better scholar and more sententious."² This last word, "sententious," is suggestive of the seventeenth century as it was a didactic age in which short, pointed, aphoristic sayings were very popular.

History had received special stress because it imparted both moral and civil instruction to the youth. These essayists judge all books on this rather narrow critical basis and as a result the historians and the moralists are ranked above the poets. Cornwallis in his Essays had a long discussion of the Moralists whom he considers most instructive. "Seneca of morality is the best." Petrarch "was the sharper poet than a Philosopher, there being a more excellent quickness in his sonnets than in his dialogues."³ In speaking of Seneca and Aristotle he says, "The firsts morality is easy to be understood and easily digested to the nourishment of virtue, the others more high, and to the readers more question-

1. Horae Subsecivae, Essay 12.

2. Cornwallis, Essay 45.

3. Ibid.

able whether it will make him curious or honest."¹

Since literature is also viewed in this utilitarian manner the imaginative beauties of poetry are overlooked to a great extent and the poetry and romances that are most popular are those which "besides the contexture for taking the fancy in their various accidents, give us the best ideas of morality, with the expressive emanation of wisdom and divine knowledge."²

Seneca's Tragedies are praised because of the practical applications that can be made from them as they "fit well the hands of a statesman for upon that supposed stage are brought many actions, and fitting the stage of life. ---" Virgil's Aeneid is defended on the same grounds as "a book meet for a Prince, and his nearest instruments: for it being agreed by the most judicial censures, that in matters of state many things fall out both beyond expectations and natural reason, which we therefore call the Acts of Fortune."³

Cornwallis distrusts poetry and allegories, because of these imaginative elements which may lead the reader astray, "for every head hath not fire enough to distil them, nor every understanding patience enough to find out the good meaning; and many are so ill, as when they have found out an interpretation meet to nourish their sensuality, they stay there, and are worse for their reading. Thus offend most poets, who larding their writings with

1. Cornwallis, Essay 45.

2. Felltham, Resolves, 27, p. 237.

3. Cornwallis, Essay 45.

fictions, feed the ignorant and vicious with as much poison as preservative."¹

Owen Felltham wrote very creditable poetry himself so we naturally expect him to show a finer appreciation of poetry, yet Felltham agrees with the other essayists that the imagination is dangerous if not held in check. "Truth may deal more closely in an allegory, or a Moral'd Fable, than a bare narration. And for flattery, no man will take poetry literal since in commendations, it rather shows what men should be, than what they are. - - The greatest danger that I find in it is, that it wantons the blood and imagination; as carrying a man in too high a delight. To prevent these let the wise poet strive to be modest in his lines. First that he dash not the Gods, next that he injure not chastity, nor corrupt the ear with lasciviousness. When these are declined, I think a grave poem, the deepest kind of writing. It wings the soul up higher than the slacked pace of prose."²

These essayists not only mistrusted the moral influence of poetry but they feared that poetry might cause a man to neglect his public duties which should always be his chief concern. Thus John Selden, the jurist, does not object to the making of verses, if they be only a private exercise, but he considers it beneath a Lord to make poetry his profession and publish his verses. "'Tis ridiculous for a Lord to print verses, 'tis well enough to make them to please himself, but to make them public is foolish. If a man in his private chamber twirl his bandstrings or

1. Cornwallis, Essay 45.

2. Felltham, Resolves, 71, p. 122.

play with a rush to please himself, 'tis well enough, but if he should go into Fleet street, and sit upon a stall, and twirl his bandstrings, or play with a rush, then all the boys in the street would laugh at him. Verse proves nothing but the quantity of syllables, they are not meant for logic."¹

With the growing distaste for things Italian, there is naturally a reaction against the sonneteering vogue and the amorous lyrics of the Elizabethan age. Then these practical essayists have little sympathy for the lover who has nothing to do but "play on a fiddle and sing a love-song, to wear sweet gloves and look on fine things; to make purposes and write verses, devise riddles and tell lies; to follow plays and study dances; to hear news and buy trifles; to sigh for love and weep for kindness, and mourn for company and be sick for fashion."² Overbury likewise satirizes the amorist who "is never without verses and musk confections and sighs to the hazard of his buttons."³ Cornwallis refers to the excess of these lovers, "Of all our delicacies, or imperfections of any kind, there is no author but affection, whose enticements bring on equally both excess and obstinacy, witness the many idle lines of lovers, who have made many foul paper for the sakes of their fair Mistress, whose luxurious conceits they have made love answer for, and called them love."⁴

A glance at the writers that these essayists thought were most profitable will indicate how dependent the seventeenth century was upon the ancient authors. This rhetorical question from one

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| 1. John Selden, Table-Talk, p. 85. | 3. Overbury, An Amorist. |
| 2. Breton, An Effeminate Fool. | 4. Cornwallis, Essay 26. |

of Felltham's Resolves characterizes the five writers that are most often praised by these essayists: "Who is it will not be as much delighted with the weighty and substantial lines of Seneca and Plutarch, the crisped Salust, the politic Tacitus, and the well-breath'd Cicero, as with the frisks and dancings of the jocund and the airy poets."¹ In these essays no comment is to be found on Elizabethan literature or on contemporary literature except the frequent references in Cornwallis to Montaigne whom he recommends for "profitable recreation," but complimentary references to Plutarch, Seneca and Cicero abound.

As I have stated before, the true politician could not rely entirely on books, but must be perfected by experience. This accounts for the insistence that travel be included as a necessary feature of this practical education. As in the Elizabethan age the experience which is gained by travel is considered invaluable to a statesman. Felltham says, "There is no map like the view of a country. Experience is the best informer. - - - Travel filleth the man, he hath but lived locked up in a larger chest, which hath seen but one land. - - - He that searcheth Nations, is becoming a gentleman of the world. One that is learned, honest and traveled is the best compound of man and so corrects the vices of one country, with the virtues of another."²

That travel was regarded ^{more} as a part of civil education than as a period devoted to social and intellectual training is apparent in this statement from the Resolves: "It were an excellent

1. Felltham, Resolves 27, p. 237.

2. Felltham, Resolves, 87, p. 153.

thing in a state, to have always a select number of youth, of the nobility and gentry; and at years of some maturity, send them abroad for education. Their parents could not better dispose of them, than in dedicating them to the Republic. They themselves could not be in a fairer way of preferment: and no question but what they might prove mightily serviceable to the State, at home; when they shall return well versed in the world, languaged, and well read in men; which for policy and negotiation, is much better than any book-learning though never so deep, and knowing."¹ The men whom Bacon considers the most profitable acquaintances for the traveler are naturally "the secretaries and employed men of ambassadors; for so in traveling in one country he shall suck the experience of many"² Felltham would wish the youth to spend more time conversing with men of note than in viewing antiquities for "There is no monument like a noble man alive."³

As the primary aim of travel was to perfect political experience, the traveler on returning home often affected a deep knowledge of foreign politics. The essayists have nothing but ridicule for this assumed knowledge of statecraft. Overbury says that the affected traveler "chooseth rather to be counted a spy than not a politician, and maintains his reputation naming great men familiarly."⁴ Horae Subsecivae speaks with disgust of these would-be politicians who when they return home and

1. Felltham, Resolves 87, p. 154.

2. Bacon, Essay 18.

3. Felltham, Resolves 87, p. 154.

4. Overbury, An Affected Traveller.

"speak of Intentions and Treaties, and Things, where they will stop with a shrug, or a Desnuff, nonnulla, and so refer you to the stars for a consequence; as if these things were too secret, too deep for your knowledge, or to make you believe that the multiplicity of affairs and state-business distract and trouble their minds when God knows, the most that they think or ruminate upon is to get the estimation and opinion in the world of that which they have no color to pretend to."¹

The influence of Italy was much feared in this century just as it had been in the Elizabethan age. Because of this fear, Felltham does not think it meet for every man to travel for, "It makes a wise man better, and a fool worse."² Fuller approves of travel only for the mature man who is firmly intrenched in his religious beliefs. "It is a good accomplishment to a man if first the stock be well grown whereon travel is grafted. Be well settled in your own religion before setting out. Travel not beyond the Alps. Ascham thanked God that he was but nine days in Italy." Then he adds an admonition against foreign vices, "Instead of bringing home Dutch drunkenness, Spanish pride, French wantonness, and Italian Atheism, bring home Dutch industry, Spanish loyalty, French courtesy, Italian frugality."³

The Italianated Englishman has a companion in this age in the Englishman who has become a Frency dandy. This young gallant who "is traveled but to little purpose; only went for a squint and came back again, yet never the more mended in his conditions,

1. Horae Subsecivae, Essay 3.

2. Felltham, Resolves 87, p. 154

3. Fuller, The Holy State, Bk.3, Chap. 4.

because he carried himself along with him" furnishes the essayists with material for humorous satire. "In^a speaking fashion~~x~~, he hath taken pains to be ridiculous, and hath seen more, than he hath perceived. His attire speaks French or Italian and his gait cries, Behold me. He censures all things by countenances and shrugs, and speaks his own language with shame and lisping; he will choke rather than confess beer good drink, and his pick-tooth is a main part of his behavior."¹

Bacon likewise having noticed the evils which often resulted from travel advises the traveler to "let his travel appear rather in his discourse than in his apparel or gesture; and in his discourse let him be rather advised in his answers, than forward to tell stories, and let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts; but only prick in some flowers that he hath learned abroad into the customs of his own country!"²

Burton in his Anatomy of Melancholy laments over the superficiality of the age. "If some one have been a traveler in Italy, or as far as the Emperor's Court, wintered in Orleans, and can court his mistress in broken French, wear his clothes neatly in the newest fashion, sing some choice out-landish tunes, discourse of Lords, Ladies, towns, Palaces, and Cities, he is complete and to be admired."³ Cornwallis says, "I should be sorry for our age (but that is out of fashion to be sorrowful) to see how willingly

1. Overbury, An Affected Traveler.

2. Bacon, Essay 18, 3d edition.

3. Burton, Anatomy of Melancholy, p. 371

we put on all habits saving virtue. Our hair shall go off, or on, as occasion serves, we will pull our brows and endure any pain to imitate the fashion, but not entertain the least virtue though she offer herself, and would be ours with less pains and expense. A year in Italy makes him forget his English and speak it brokenly and lisping; they run away with all villainous customs and think it fine to talk of Guila and Lucretia, the famous curtizans, methinks these fellows are like snow-balls that carry away part of the dust they are rolled upon. These are base imitations begotten between the senses and the fantasy, bastards unknown to the inward true discerning soul."¹

In Horae Subsecivae these affectations are more severely criticised than in any of the other essays. These affectations appear "most in some that return from traveling, who, being incapable of other proficiency by their observations of governments of nations, situations of countries, dispositions of people, their policy and the like, these things not understanding, or not knowing how to apply, which to the bettering of our judgment, and manners, is the right use of all we find either in reading or travel, they in their stead bring home only fashions of behavior and such outward appearances, that a man must guess they have traveled (for there is no other way) by a legge, or a Peccadill, or a Pica-devant, or a new block, or a mangled suit, or words all compliment and no sense, or mincing of their own language, or making new and absurd derivations, such as yet the world never heard of: or

1. Cornwallis, Essay 20.

in every period of their discourse, to say something of Paris, and Orleans, Blous and Tours and then conclude that the River of Loire is the most navigable of the world; or to talk of their mistresses and protest that the French Damosella is the most courtly, most complete, and for exquisiteness in behavior and fashion, may be a pattern to all the Ladies of Europe." With all this levity and lightness which the French traveler shows, he is preferred to the Italian traveler, "for a light fool is always more sufferable than a serious."¹

IV.

Although it is not the essayists' purpose to sketch the social graces and obligations of man but rather to stress his public duties, yet the statesman is not to be wholly lacking in gentlemanly qualities. Some of the social ideals of the Renaissance have been retained and grafted on to the politician. This is especially prominent in their ideas of magnificence and the regulation of expenses. Although a gentleman may find it necessary to limit his expenses in private, he should spend lavishly in public entertainment as it will gain esteem for him among men. This formula for regulating expenses is given in Horae Subsecivae, "Expenses should ever be limited according to the occasion and our abilities. He ought to make a rate of what he means to spend. In private expenses it is good to be

1. Horae Subsecivae, Essay 3.

near, in public magnificent."¹ Felltham likewise agrees that "To spare in weighty causes is the worst and most unhappy part of thrift than can be."²

A gentleman must never cease to be hospitable or liberal in the giving of alms. "Sure 'tis more honorable for noblemen to make beggars by their liberality than by their oppressions,"³ is the opinion of Fuller. "He, that is penurious, turns his friends into enemies and hardens that which himself desires to find pliant."⁴ Brathwaite complains that hospitality has decayed in England. "To play usurer is to play the murther, said the orator, Cicero, which may appear (if ever) even in the ruins of this time; where hospitality which was the glory of England, is vanished, and serving men who by reason of the isle, so suppress the barbarous tumult of all turbulent heads, are turned to a few gaudy pages, colored like so many butter-flies."⁵ The author of Horae Subsecivae also believes that hospitality is worthy of renovation as it is such a stay to the country, such a relief to the poor, so honorable to the gentleman himself and so exemplary for posterity.⁶

These essayists realize that "The world is but a more magnificent building; all the stone are graduately concemented and there is none that substiteth alone," and that ceremonies and common courtesies may not be laid aside by even politicians.

1. Horae Subsecivae, Essay 7.
2. Felltham, Resolves 25, p. 233.
3. Fuller, The Holy State, Bk. IV, Chap. 12.
4. Felltham, Resolves 25, p. 233.
5. Brathwaite, Essay 2.
6. Horae Subsecivae, Essay 10.

Felltham says, "The most staid judgments are persons of the highest civility. They think, to displease is none of the proper interests of man. Nature made him communicable and sociable. To be rude or foolish is the badge of a weak mind, and of one deficient in the conversive quality of man. - - - It is not for one gentleman to speak to another what shall beget either shame or anger or call upon ~~each~~ either a blush or a frown."¹ Bacon wishes these ceremonies to sit lightly on man, for "if he labors too much to express them, he shall lose their grace; which is to be natural and unaffected. Some men's behavior is like a verse, wherein every syllable is measured; how can a man comprehend great matters that breaketh his mind too much to small observations? Not to use ceremonies at all, is to teach others not to use them again; and so diminish respect to himself; especially they be not to be omitted to strangers and formal natures; but the dwelling upon them, and exalting them above the moon, is not only tedious, but doth diminish the faith and credit of him that speaks."²

This affectation or ceremoniousness of the mere Courtier or gallant who "puts more confidence in his words than meaning and more in his pronunciation than his words"³ is a fit target for the satire of these essayists. They show a tendency to react against the extravagant adornments of the English language which had been so prominent, especially in the Elizabethan age.

1. Felltham, Resolves, 65, p. 114.

2. Bacon, Essay 52, 3rd edition.

3. Overbury, A Phantastique.

Selden laments that such a change has been wrought since Saxon times; "If you look upon the language spoken in the Saxon time, and the language spoken now, you will find the difference to be just, as if a man had a cloak that he wore plain in Queen Elizabeth's days and since, here has put in a piece of red, and there a piece of orange-tawny. We borrow words from the French, Italian, Latin as every Pedantic man pleases. We have more words than notions; half a dozen words for the same thing."¹

The pedantic tone is to be avoided in all conversations, "To use in discoursing of an ordinary subject words of a high sounding and tragic strain is as unseemly as walking on stilts where one may go in slippers."² The habit of using antique words is also ridiculed in Horae Subsecivae for "old antique words, such as have been dead, buried and rotten in the time of our great grandfathers would become the ghost of Chaucer on a stage but not a man of the present time."³

Johnson sums up in one concise sentence the language which he considers best suited for a politician; "Our language must be natural without affectation, honest, comely, significant, expressive, proper, void of all fear and effeminate terms."⁴

Judging from the manner in which these essayists ridiculed the affectations of the traveler we would expect their ideas of dress to be somewhat conventional. Cornwallis says, "For clothes, he that shuns singularity (for from singularity comes

1. Seldon, Table Talk, p. 64
2. Horae Subsecivae, Essay 3.
3. Ibid.
4. Johnson, Essay 13.

either disdain or envy) let his attire be comformable to custom, and change with company."¹ Felltham adds that "He that will be singular in his apparel had need have something superlative to balance that affectation."² Cornwallis and Fuller show a very conformable attitude toward the customs of their day. "Custom is a thing indifferent and things indifferent, receiving their life from light grounds; every country hath some peculiarity to itself by which when we are there, we ought to be ruled."³ "For the received custom in the place where we live is the most competent judge of decency, from which we must not appeal to our own opinion."⁴

V.

The early seventeenth century was an age of rather commonplace moralizing in which at least two influences were blended, the stoic and the Christian. The ideal gentleman of the early part of this century reflects both of these influences.

Cornwallis, in whom the stoic elements were most prominent, objects to some of the stoic doctrines as "they stray from Christianity," yet he thinks that there "can be no life safe, which borrows not some of the rules from their precepts."⁵ Temperance, Fortitude, and Patience are necessary virtues of the man of affairs for "Against no life doth the force of vice op-

1. Cornwallis, Essay 24.

2. Felltham, Resolve, 52.

3. Cornwallis, Essay 24.

4. Fuller, The Holy State, Bk. III, Chap. 6.

5. Cornwallis, Essay 46.

pose herself, and make so strong a preparation as against the life of a statesman." Vice assaults him "with the weapons of power, self-love, Ambition, Corruption, Revenge and Fear."¹

Cornwallis would have his ideal gentleman to stand undaunted by any of the "gross perturbations" of the world and gives him the following advice. "Against this and all other adversities the way to withstand them is knowledge; love them not and thou shalt not be shipwrecked with their loss, that thou shalt not love them, knowledge will show thee, that they are unworthy to be beloved, since there hangs upon them uncertainty."² "Let books and advice rectify and prepare us fit for entertaining of all fortunes, victories, overthrows, calamities, and happiness."³

Cornwallis, like a true stoic, exalts reason over the affections and thinks that there is nothing "comparable to the unmoved disposition wrought by reason."⁴ Cornwallis would have all actions spring from a "deliberated discourse."⁵ He even disregards affection in friendship and advises the gentleman in choosing a friend to consider first his position, for if it be too low, "he will have occasion to use you too often and his bareness promiseth little help."⁶ Bacon, in his cold, intellectual way, agrees with Cornwallis that there can be little friendship but between equals. He likewise gives some very sceptical advice concerning love: "For whosoever esteemeth too much

1. Cornwallis, Essay 46.

2. Cornwallis, Essay 36.

3. Cornwallis Essay 36.

4. Ibid, Essay 8.

5. Ibid, Essay 26

6. Ibid, Essay 6.

of amorous affection ouitteth both riches and wisdom. - - - They do best who, if they cannot but admit love, yet make it keep quarter; and sever it wholly from their serious affairs and actions of life."¹ Cornwallis catalogues the virtues of love in a very light and flippanant tone: "It is a pretty, soft thing, this same love, an excellent company-keeper, full of gentleness and affability, makes men fine, and to go cleanly, teacheth them qualities, handsome protestations: and if the ground be not too barren, it bringeth forth rhymes and songs full of passion. . . . Yea, it is a very fine thing, the badge of eighteen, and upward, no^t to be disallowed; better spend thy time so than at Dice."²

Although Felltham unites with Cornwallis in saying that "A good resolution is the most fortifying armor that a discreet man can wear. That can defend him against the unwelcome shuffles that the poor rude world puts on him,"³ yet Felltham cares not for the "unmoved Stoic," and endows his ideal gentleman with a great love for his fellow-man. "In friendship, I would ever remember my friend's kindness, I would forget the favor I do him; I would also forget his neglects; but I would remember my own failings. Friendship thus preserved, ends not but with life."⁴

The stoic and the Christian attitudes toward life are similar in that each strives to discipline man so that the reverses of the world will not dismay him. The extreme Christian

1. Bacon.

2. Cornwallis, Essay 5.

3. Felltham, Resolves 2, p. 3.

4. Ibid, Resolves 10, p. 198.

point of view is shown best in Satyræ Seriae, and the essays of Brathwaite, and Tuvill. The religion described in these essays consists of an utter disregard of this world and a preparation for death. Death is the end of life, as it sets the soul free. These two characteristic sentences from Brathwaite sum up pretty accurately their idea of what constitutes a devout Christian: "Be not ambitious, there is a good covetousness and it is heavenly." "O, may my taste be thus seasoned, my palate thus relished, my affections thus marshalled, my whole pilgrim course thus managed that my taste may distaste earth, relish heaven, and alter her dissolution from earth, enjoy her mansion in heaven."¹

But as we have already noted, the ideal gentleman was to be a man of affairs, and the man of affairs could not so entirely renounce the world, even if he wanted to. These essayists in their religious zeal have left their sketch of the ideal gentleman to portray a religious recluse.

In Horæ Subsecivæ these Christian attributes are combined with the ambitious desires of the statesman, and ambition is praised because the statesman uses it "more for the general good" than for his own "private respect."² Yet the author of Horæ Subsecivæ is, like Brathwaite, impressed with the shortness of life and since life is so short, and "death so certain, a man should not confine his thoughts within the small circle of the present being but dilate them to more high and worthy considerations and one is the immortality of the soul which without comparison is the chief and only happiness."³

1. Brathwaite, Essay 4.

3. Ibid., Essay 9.

2. Horæ Subsecivæ, Essay 26.

Bacon, the practical man of affairs, of course does not agree with Satyrae Seriae that life is merely a preparation for death but Bacon praises the man who "dies in an earnest pursuit."¹

Cornwallis seeks to make his ideal consistent and to retain his attitude of worldly superiority. He defines ambition as "What we call licorousness in children, greediness in clowns, misery in courteous persons, the same is ambition in higher fortunes."² He warns the youth against the pursuit of fame as "Fame and Oblivion and such things are but coins of our stamping,"³ and have no value of themselves except what men give to them. But Cornwallis cannot conceal his preferences long and adds, "I confess there is a satisfaction in the execution of these high attempts and I hold them not hurtful but restorative to the mind, if managed by the skill of reason and thought or by a knowledge able to limit the desert. I would choose a young man that loves fame, much sooner than a heavy spirited fellow whose sluggish earthly thoughts cannot mount so high."⁴

Felltham, with his sensible, liberal (for his day) religious beliefs, has little difficulty in combining the practical man and the religious man in his conception of the ideal gentleman. Felltham does not think that a moderate ambition necessarily means a conflict with a religious principle but he would encourage a man "with an industrious prosecution to persevere in the rising way."⁵

1. Bacon, Essay 2.

2. Cornwallis, Essay 10.

3. Ibid, Essay 32.

4. Ibid, Essay 35.

5. Felltham, Resolves, 99, p. 176.

Neither does Felltham agree with Tuvill or Brathwaite that all pleasures are evil. There is "nothing more lawful" for the gentleman "than moderately to satisfy the pleasing desires of nature; so as they infringe not religion, hurt not ourselves, or the commerce of human society."¹

Selden likewise criticizes the age for the narrow, Puritanical attitude it takes toward pleasure. "'Tis much the Doctrine of the times that men should not please themselves, but deny themselves everything they take delight in, not look upon Beauty, wear no good clothes, eat no good meat, etc." "If they be not to be us'd, why did God make them?"² "Whilst you are upon the earth enjoy the good things that are here (to that end were they given) and be not melancholy and wish yourself to heaven."³

In spite of these pointed criticisms, we find that the conception of the gentleman, which these early seventeenth-century essayists held, was a much more sombre ideal than his Renaissance ancestor. His social development was wholly subordinated to his political duties, and the preoccupation of the age with moral and religious questions had robbed him of the joy and zest of life which had been one of the chief charms of the Renaissance gentleman.

Although the didacticism of these essayists may at times seem very dull and uninteresting, yet no where **else** in either the poetry or prose of the early seventeenth century does one find the ideal gentleman more precisely formulated.

1. Felltham, Resolves, 99, p. 176.

2. Selden, Table Talk, p. 44

3. Ibid, p. 34.

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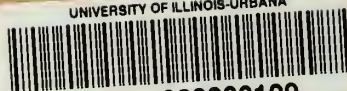
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